Vol. 2 Chicago, Illinois, December, 1925 No. 9

The Liberal

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Published monthly by

The Peoples Church
CHICAGO

Ten Cents a Copy One Dollar a Year

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SCHMIDT BROS. CONSTRUCTION CO.

BUILDERS

THE LIBERAL

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ON MAKING CHRISTMAS LAST

Altho' it is mid-November as I write, the other day from the top a bus in the Loop I saw the shop windows already resplendent in Christmas attire. Christmas again! Already the throng which all day moves to and fro in the business and shopping center of our active city is beginning to feel the influence of the Christmas spirit. Last evening when returning from a lecture I watched the people stop and smilingly look at a large department store window which contained a replica of Santa Claus, his cutter and six reindeer. After a glance they passed on. If one could know what took place in their minds and hearts in that moment while they tarried there one would have the best interpretation of the Christmas spirit. As I watched them pause for a momentary look in the window I saw taking place the miracle of Christmas.

Christmas is that fragment of time in the passing of year that inspires a new alignment of our interest and calls for a new adjustment of the things we are emphasizing in life. It is a spiritual exercise and without its regular occurrence life would be unbearable and disheartening.

The economic conditions under which we are all living keeps us all working hard most of the time. Hurry is almost a universal characteristic. All is activity. Competition compels sleeplessness. The demands of modern life are so extensive that the fine process of living life as a great spiritual adventure is most difficult. The pressure of life is increasing as the living of life becomes more complex. The arts of reflection and introspection are breaking down under the weight of mechanistic programs. There is a danger in being too busy. All about us every where are evidences of the inevitable reactions of too much pressure. Health and morality are always reliable indicators of the economic and social speed. The obvious observation plainly reveals that without the interval of rest and relaxation the modern world would soon make physical and spiritual wrecks of us all.

Christmas is the necessary interval in the life of the year that brings us the restoration of our finest selves. In its spirit we find the renaissance of the soul. We could not endure without its beneficence. It is not a matter of creed or dogma or race. Theories of a birth or arguments of theology are of least importance in the appreciation of the power and beauty of the Yule-tide. It is not a time of argumentation but a time of idealization. We lose its chief distinction and its ennobling grandeur, if we emphasize any theological variance.

Christmas takes us all back to cradle-time. We lovingly gather around a smiling crooning baby. What affairs of state or business worries can command our interest while a cradle calls? We are home at Christmas time. The world becomes young again. We think about someone that has been very little in our hearts during the busy months of the year. Someone sends us a Christmas card that we thought had quite forgotten us and a tenderness comes as we recall other days and other hearts. Here in the northland the festival comes when winter is abroad with its accompaniment of snow and ice. Yet its coming brings the warmth and glow of love which makes the heart a tabernacle of peace.

There is no part of our life that is not influenced by the spirit of Christmas. Its presence captivates us all. Its charm permeates our whole social and business and personal life. I am noticing it already as I go about. The spirit is irresistible. The miser has a much more difficult time being miserly. The sinner finds it harder work to sin. The very air is filled with this unseen beauty of graciousness. It is more difficult to talk about our rights and much easier to see our duties. Justice in our courts is sweetened by mercy at Christmas time. The criminal in our penal institutions is reminded of the season by acts of considerateness unknown during the rest of the year. Unfortunates and out casts of every description are reminded that even they are not entirely forgotten and within their hearts there is still something which responds to affection and remembrance. Even dumb brutes are treated more humanly when Christmas time comes round. It is always more difficult to be unkind and inconsiderate when holly wreaths hang in the windows and the monotous tinkle of the Salvation Army Santa Claus is heard on the corners of the streets.

Our wavering faith in the goodness and kindness of humanity is restored by the spirit of Christmas. We see each other from a different line of vision. The bad seem better than we thought and the good are finer than we realized. It is the magic of Christmas. Without this yearly festival of good cheer we would soon become a decadent-people. A self-centered life is a self-destructive life. Selfishness is the unpardonable sin. The spirit of Christmas is at enmity with the spirit of selfishness. No selfish individual ever truly lives—they just exist. They miss the poetic rhythm of life. In them there is no song. A Christmas carol is a weapon which shames greed and avarice. It is a warrior whose sword is victorious in a bloodless battle. It is passive resistance at its fullest power and finest manifestation.

In the midst of this vibrant and universal good-will seen everywhere and felt by all during the holiday time I always find myself saying again and again,—"Why cannot we make Christmas last all the year through." I am wondering about that now. Potentially the world is so constituted that we could always express ourselves on the high plane which predominates at Christmas. But soon after the new year comes in we find ourselves back in the old way. Back to strife, contention, competition, hurry, worry and debt. Yet, I wonder, if we ever get back as far into the crash of things as we were before we had this beautiful season of Christmas. I think we never get all the way back. The annual advent and baptism of Christmas charm always leaves us nearer the ideal. The way unto the abundant life is long yet we are slowly and surely advancing. Every Christmas brings us renewed energy and revitalized ideals. We are never the same after it has passed. When the tree of Christmas that has bloomed in our home whose fruit is the candles, trinkets, presents and toys for our children and loved ones, begins to shed its needles and when loving hands remove and pack away the tinsel decorations we are better and finer in every way for having this love, kindness, joy and beauty of season that we call—Christmas.

BOOK CHATS

Those of us who used to read Bert Leston Taylor's "Line O' Type" column (I wonder if there was anyone who didn't) remember that for a few weeks before Christmas he always emphasized the organization which he founded called S. P. U. G. Every day

for weeks preceding Christmas Day he would write or publish a paragraph or two about the Society for the Prevention of Useless Giving. Of course, we all realize that if a gift symbolizes our love and esteem it is not a useless gift even if it possesses no pragmatic value. The value of the gift is always determined by the spirit in which it is given. But B. L. T. was right in his thesis. It is always good judgment to crystalize our gifts in some object which has utility as well as association.

I can think of no better Christmas gift which is the embodiment of sentiment and practicability than a book. To our friends and members of our family who love books there is no more sensible present. Yet if our book gift is not to place us as thoughtless givers we must consider two most important matters in the giving of books.

It is absolutely necessary that we know something about the book we present and something about the literary taste of the one to whom the book is to be given. We can be useless in our giving if we give the wrong sort of book to the right sort of person or the right sort of book to the wrong sort of person. The book and the person must have a common meeting point. It must be the right sort of book for the right sort of person. There must be a mutual interest from the viewpoint of both. Unless we are sure of our understanding of both the book and the person it is much better to give an order on a book shop and let the recipient make his own selection. Herein is the path of certainty as to the correct choice. I speak from experience. A very good friend of mine recently graduated from the University at Madison. I gave her an order on a book shop as a graduation present. She told me she had selected Count Keyserling's "Travel Diary of a Philosopher." Although I knew somewhat of her literary standards I never would have selected that particular book for this particular young lady. As it is she made her own selection and her library is indicative with another work of her own personality. It was a splendid choice, too.

A gift book is always highly esteemed but it is a pity to take up valuable library space with books that are misfits and which are only kept for sentimental reasons.

Why not make this Christmas a book-Christmas for your friends? Never in the history of publishing has there been such an offering of good things. Every branch of literary expression in every medium is represented on the lists. We can become kinsmen with the master minds by knowing good literature. A familiarity of what they have thought and the beauty they have captured on the printed page will enrich and embellish life. Milton has told us that "a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit." What more appropriate or delightful gift that shall always be a delightful reminder of our thoughtfulness and esteem than giving to someone we love — a good book.

THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO CHRISTMAS

Up in what I call the "North Country," where we take our rest and play day in the summer, there is indeed a veritable road that leads to Christmas. I listened like a child to a fairy-tale while one of the natives in answer to my questions told me how they celebrate the "Yule-tide." The road passes through this little mining town, situated on the border of a large beautiful lake, surrounded by forest, and hills, mountainous in height. It is the custom a day or two before Christmas Eve for the young girls to go into the woods after a small Fir tree, and bring it home, each

for their respective families. It is an occasion of great jollification, this of hunting the Christmas tree. Those sturdy blue-eyed fair-haired girls, wrapped in sweaters and scarfs, coats, caps, mittens and boots to attire the entire family, sally forth armed with hatchets —laughing —singing up the road into the pine woods.

The small children beg to join the "tree-hunters" — bundling themselves with all the clothing they can find, boots large enough for them to fall into, and mittens they cannot keep on—these little tots look forward with longing to the time when they will be grown up and can go after the family Christmas tree!

It is 15 or 20 degrees below zero—the sun shines brightly but does not thaw or mar the white purity of the snow, sparkling like diamonds on every crusted weed and bush, stick and stone, and bedecking the pine boughs like soft clouds fallen there sprinkled with star dust! The forest in its blanket of snow is beautiful—majestic—inspiring beyond expression of words. The stillness far more intense than the summer quiet for there is no bird-song, none of the little denizens of the woods, scampering around they are enjoying their winter nap in their underground homes. There are no trails—no familiar paths, just that soft white carpet of scintillating loveliness, unbroken by footfall unless some way-faring rabbit has scampered through the woods leaving its tiny round foot prints; these the girls laughingly choose to follow; often breaking through the sparkling crust and sinking half their length into deep drifts. Some distance into the woods they cast about for their trees—this one too large—that one too small — another oh! so beautiful—but too splendid to be cut down—sacrificing its life for a brief holiday, —on they go, not reckoning they must drag their trophy back the same distance! Finally having selected their trees and chopped them down they retrace their steps, each dragging their tree behind them, becoming so weary with the tramping one now and then throws herself full length into a snow bed laughing and shouting till the others pull her up again. At last the road is reached; on they trudge into the village, calling and shouting with glee that all may know that the tree bearers have returned. Several men with a long bob-sleigh and team of horses drive over the ice across the lake and into the forest, bringing back tall balsams for the Church festival, and the tallest, straightest and best of all for the village tree to stand at the head of the street where it meets the highway.

There on Christmas eve all the families gather, the little tots close to the tree—the young people form a circle, dancing around them, the older folks in groups on the outside—then out on the crisp clear air their voices ring with carols and folk-song. Silvery tinkling bells first afar — then near — thrill the children with awe and expectancy —a sleigh is drawn into the circle—and a jolly rollicking Santa Claus gives each one a gaily colored bag filled with candy and nuts, and then away he drives, head nodding—bells jingling—disappearing up the highway!

After the children are whisked home to dreamland there is much visiting between neighbors, each with the family board laden with cakes, tarts, jellies, cookies in all imaginable shapes and kinds — things made only for Christmas; every housewife taking great pride in her skill for concocting these delectable holiday sweets. In every home stands a Christmas tree, aglitter with trinkets and toys; the warmth of the house bringing out that delightful fir tree incense.

Because it is an annual event in our lives we are apt to think the bringing of the evergreen tree into our homes at Christmas has ever been a festival connect-

ed wholly with the birth of the Christ Child. However, it is interesting to learn by studying the origin of this most beautiful custom, that the ancient Druids, long, long before the coming of Jesus, believed that by bringing the evergreen tree into the home before frost touched it, that from that time until spring no evil could enter. Later the Teutons, following the old Druid story, sensed the spirit of the evergreens, and added decorations of gifts and toys and every brilliant thing they could think of, with the idea that if the evergreen tree in their home protected them from evil they in turn paid it honor by bestowing gifts and decorations upon it. The old English word "Yule-tide' in ancient times meant the period of December and January, and was sometimes called "former-Yule" and "after-Yule." The Scandinavians celebrated "Yule-tide" long before Christian times, as a festival of rejoicing and fun-making due to the passing of the Winter Solstice, when you know the sun reaching the end of its path turns back, making its way southward, lengthening our days, continually increasing its warmth, its golden rays penetrating to the heart of the sleeping trees and bushes. It is then under their covering of ice and snow the tiny buds begin to form which will come forth some four months hence in leaf and blossom.

In this little Northern mining town, where the village street meets the highway, stands the giant evergreen, the trinkets and tinsel glistening with frost, the many colored lights twinkling like jewels; the street is deserted, the merry-makers seeking warm firesides to continue their visiting and feasting; there is a strange stillness after the songs and laughter of the early evening. Twigs and branches crack sharply—boards in houses and fences creak in the clear freezing atmosphere; once or twice a wolf bays miles away in the forest or on the edge of the lake. The moon rides slowly up the heavens, turning by magic the village—the forest—the hills —the road—into gleaming silver; the tree-shadows fall in cold fantastic pattern across the snow. A great star hangs against the steel-blue sky high above the tree which stands alone on this Holy Night at the end of the road—casting its spell over the village, whispering—"Peace on Earth — Good Will to Men!"

* * * * * *

"May the Road that leads from Christmas
Through the New Year be a way
That you will like to travel with every sunny day.
Just full of friendly greetings, and should some clouds appear,
May every raindrop bring you a friendly word of cheer.
May a very Merry Christmas start your journeying, and then
Each day be filled with Gladness
'Till Christmas comes again!'

Grace Thayer Bradley.

SERVICES

Held at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the New Uptown Temple of The Peoples Church, Chicago. (Stenographically Reported)

DR. PRESTON BRADLEY:

My friends, I am sure that you will agree with me that this is a very historical and a very important event in the life of our Church and in the life and service of the work which I am trying to do in Chicago.

I appreciate more than I can express all of the efforts and the sacrifices that you have made to make this work possible and to bring our building to a successful conclusion. There will needs be much work done yet. It will have to be a winter of work. We are far from seeing the end of our labor. I am very grateful to you

for coming here today and showing your interest and your spirit in this service. That means much to me.

I think it is the most important moment of my life, and I cannot express the feelings that are in my heart and soul.

Nearly fourteen years ago with eighty-six people this church was inaugurated. Every year we have grown steadily and normally. We have avoided the sensational, without sacrificing timeliness and interest. Until this year we are to see the flowering of our ideal in our own home.

Into the box which we are going to place in the cornerstone, and which will be placed by the president of our board of trustees, Mr. C. K. Anderson, we have placed the following: First, a copy of the by-laws of the Peoples Church; the October and November Liberal; a copy of the Chicago Tribune and the Herald Examiner of this date; a copy of the Church calendar of this date; the current year book of the Woman's Club; a photograph of our two choirs, the chorus choir and the junior choir; a photograph of the present president of the board of trustees, Mr. Anderson;—and then—they have a great deal of confidence in the stability of this box, because they have put in my picture as well. (Laughter). Also one case-book which we used in our building campaign, and one coin of the issue of 1925; one copy of my sermon on "God and Evolution," and one photograph of the building.

Before I actually lay the stone, I want to read to you from John Ruskin:

"Therefore, when we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for the present delight, nor for present use alone, let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, 'See! this our fathers did for us.' "

In this moment, Infinite Truth, of dedication and of love, we consecrate anew to the ideals of freedom and liberality in religion our church.

And as we lay this cornerstone, may we do it with love in our hearts for the people of all religions and of all races.

Amen.

(Dr. Bradley then laid the stone).

Now I hope that you will all be here to attend the dedication services, and I am sure that you will.

In behalf of the board of trustees I want to thank you for coming. And it is a splendid audience that has gathered to this ceremony, and I hope to see you all again on Sunday.

"RELIGION IN THE MAKING"

A Sermon by Dr. Bradley Delivered in The Peoples Church, Sunday Morning, November 15th. Stenographically Reported.

My subject this morning is "Religion in the Making." I am indebted for the phraseology of the theme to Professor Robinson, who gave us that most remarkable book, and what was still more remarkable was the manner in which it was received by the people, called "Mind in the Making." It is considered very bad form these days not to have read the "Mind in the Making" by Professor Robinson.

To many minds that is impossible for religion to be in a process of making, for from their viewpoint religion is a definite static thing; it is not something to be made or in the process of making; it is something which was made many years ago and remains a solid identity. To the

other point of view, the point of view which is suggested by my theme, of course, takes the direct opposite position.

I take the position that is suggested by the phraselogy of my subject. Religion is just as much in a process of development as any other principle that has to do with the increasing of the personality of the entire man. In other words, that the definiteness of the evolution of the soul, the development of the soul is just as much assured as any of the natural laws which govern in any scientific evolutionary interpretation of the physical universe.

I believe that the great mystical relationships which constitute the background of many of the most vital experiences of life are governed by just as definite laws as are any experiences or any processes of nature or the world of the material or mechanistic universe. I believe there are laws which apply to the development of the soul; I believe there are laws of survival which apply to the esoteric consciousness of the individual; I believe there are principles back of this development of what we call "personality" that are quite as vital and quite as necessary of understanding as any of the principles that so many of us in our materialistic and mechanistic viewpoint of the universe, with our continual emphasis upon the outstanding virtue of the merely biological or some other approach to the solution of the problems of the material universe, in our ambitions to understand the world or universe in which we live, the world of the universe of tangible concreteness, the world in that great universe that is a part of our physical identity continuously, the universe whose air we breathe, the universe whose minerals and vegetables and dirt go to make up the physical structure of the body through the necessity of food; this universe about us everywhere is so challenging a universe that all of us lose ourselves while trying to explain it. We become so completely saturated with an effort to know our universe of physical and extraneous importance that we lose sight of the more vast universe, a universe that is so tremendously more expansive and spacious, the great universe of the soul, which does not mean at all a universe that is trying to establish some relationship with some condition that may exist after death, — not all, but this universe where my real personality lives; this universe that can only be fathomed by taking the similarity of these great physical laws in the physical mechanical universe and transferring them into the great spiritual vitalities of life. This is the universe with which religion is concerned.

Now when we come then to the thought of "religion in the making," we mean religion is an evolutionary process. It is necessary for us to disabuse our minds of certain preconceived notions that are associated with the word "religion." To a certain type of poorly informed mind, the word "religion" only means Christianity. When you mention to them the word "religion" immediately they think of Christianity. Then to another type of mind the word "religion" always means something that has to do with our moral natures, and when they speak of a man being a "religious man" they think of him as practicing the highest ethics and the highest moralities.

If we are to discuss this primarily for the forepart of my address with any degree of accuracy at all as to the historical alignment of the doctrine of religion, it is necessary for us to disarm our minds of one or two of these preconceived notions before any deductions are made.

In the first place, religion primarily has nothing to do whatever with any definite standards of crystalized expressions of organizations for the propagation of any kind of faith. "Religion," as we all know, originally meant

courting the favor of the gods. In the early far-off development of the race, to be religious meant to have a sort of flirtation with the gods, and he hoped by ceremonials and by appeasement, by routine, by rituals he hoped to please the gods, and the origin and derivation of the word "religion' is associated with that idea in connection with our study.

Of course, that compels us to begin a long way off in the development of the religious idea, and to see if we cannot adjust the point in the development where there was injected into the philosophy the idea of another world, or the idea of immortality.

The whole religious idea came with man's effort to explain the mystery of himself. The basis of all religion is still a mystery. I am not so sure but that all life is nothing but a great mystery. I know the older I grow and the more mature I become and the more I try to separate myself by being unprejudiced in religious thinking the more conscious I am of the great mystery of things. I feel a kinship with those great fundamental minds that hold that no person ought to speak on religion these days without having a great familiarity with the great intellects who have thought about this question; men who have produced such penetrative interpretations that they appeal only to the purely mathematical minds of the materialistically inclined thinker. Men like James Martineau. No one ever ought to glibly become dogmatic in regard to religious principles until they know something about that monumental work of James Martineau, the author of "Religious Experience." Men like Josiah Royce; men like Fiske; men like Joseph Priestly, and Professor James who has given us a classic in his book, "The Will to Believe." Minds of this caliber, minds who are entitled to a respectful consideration on the part of any mind, for their superiority is unquestioned in the world of philosophical religious research. Men who are not primarily concerned with banishing gods from out of the skies; men who are not concerned with the old trite traditional arguments of theism, that are so glibly handled by Mr. Darrow; men who are not concerned with the old tried and conventional approaches on the question that everyone detects as having been discarded by the really great thinkers in their treatment of this theme.

The first background of man's whole religious consciousness was the background of mystery. I cannot place my finger in the study of anthropology, on that particular spot in the development of the human whereby he had first a predisposition toward a religious consciousness. There are those who maintain that it came with an awakening of his moral nature. Now, what would inspire morality in the social life of a human animal? He could not be inspired to any moral life without something being inherently a part of his nature. It seems to me that just here our whole scientific theory of the origin of brute and human life has to face its greatest challenge. For there is certainly something in the human animal that is a distinguishing feature from any other form of life. And I would not care—of course, whether I care or not would not change the facts. This is only a personal expression. But I would not care to feel that there was not a distinction which was based on something finer in the world of our spiritual consciousness. I detect all the attributes that are so delightfully human in the animal world. I love my dog, and my dog loves me, and he is always glad to see me and I am always glad to see him, and we have been inseparable for over three years, and I know he responds to the affections of my heart and of the household. But there is a great gulf between us after all. I do not know his world, and he does not know mine. Both of us are purely sentimentalists in our relationships. He can bring no in-

tellectual understanding to my world, and I can bring none to him. I cannot see through the lenses of a dog's eye, and the dog cannot see through the lenses of a human eye.

This whole question of religion, this whole differentiation in the various manifestations of life—though all life may have a common origin, deviating in the paths of evolutionary processes, determined by pre-natal conditions and environmental influences, due to external forces and laws, but still I cannot help but feel that in this whole theory of evolution there is a tremendous relationship which exists between a man's higher consciousness that cannot be explained by any mechanistic theory of the world.

No machine ever had a conscience. If I am only a machine, if I am only law, law, law—only a bundle of biological processes, with a brain to rot and go back to dust; and the heart!—which is the miracle of the ages!—with an expression of physical interpretation through the mediumship of some great force which we call life, that the brain of man has never yet been able to conceive or fathom, with all the ingenuity of the human intellect, with its radio, with all its inventions and smartness and cleverness and acuteness of man, man has never yet fathomed the greatest riddle of all, the riddle of the inner life that he knows is a part of himself. That riddle remains still a riddle. Our loves and hates, our disappointments, our failures, our successes, our tragedies, our whole background of spiritual things, all of which go to make up the spiritual personality and identity of the individual, have never been fathomed.

Now, that has been the struggle of religion. In every moment and every history of the human race, in every particular station and group of human society, man has attempted to find some answer to this inner urge of things. This inner urge stands still the great challenge of man.

Now, what do we discover? Why, we discover—and this is a most interesting fact—in the first place, the universality of the expression of human life did not vary, nor did it predetermine with any degree of certainty when this idea should manifest in any particular group. We have verification that it suggested itself to the consciousness of man in widely diversified areas. There were some great groups in Egypt; there were the Mound Builders of America; other groups in this part of the world; there were a few in the far Iceland interior; some buried mounds of pre-historic civilizations of Greenland—when Greenland was named it had an entirely different geographical environment than it has today, a great country of forests and virgin fields.

Now never once in the history of the race did this thing develop spontaneously. Everywhere you touch humanity in the development of human history you will find creeping out into expression some effort to explain this thing which we call the religious consciousness. That is the remarkable thing about it, its universality. To me that is the hugely remarkable thing about it. It is more remarkable, much more remarkable than the thought being born with a little group somewhere, or being born with one man somewhere, and then gradually by propaganda he was able to give it to the world. But that was not the way. You can dig into the tombs of the ancients and you will find crystalizations and manifestations of man's effort to articulate his inner consciousness, his social relationship; man's effort to articulate some sort of relationship in society that had a moral and spiritual emphasis.

The universality of that condition is one of the most startling things in connection with it, and one of the things that must be taken into account if we try to give the theistic origin or the fact of God.

I am not an atheist; I am not an infidel; I refuse to be labelled by the association of man who have deified the human intellect to the exclusion of everything else. And we are now having in this world a renaissance of the deification of the intellect. People are getting so smart that they know more than God, and because of their cleverness and mental quickness and alertness, they evidence a solution, which, of course, to every fundamental philosopher is evidence of pedantry entirely.

So when we come to the great universality of this thing, it is tremendously significant to the mind that is trying to find out what religion is. In the first place, it had nothing to do with God in the sense of having any conception of monotheism. Monotheism is a comparatively recent thing. And the whole world is indebted to the Hebrew for it, but for the most it does not extend back more than eight thousand years.

Man naturally, due to the fact of his potent intellectuality, rather than his kinetic intellectuality, he constructed his God all in proportion to the degree of his intelligence. And so, way back yonder he had gods that were just crooked sticks or colored stones; gods that dwelt in water-falls; gods that dwelt in the sky and the clouds and the star; and we must not forget that up until so recently as two thousand years ago Greece was filled with deities. You know the history of Mount Olympus. Every well informed mind is familiar with the mythology of Greece. We must not forget when they flowered in architecture, when they flowered in philosophy,—even the idea of medicine was first given to the world by Hippocrates; even back yonder when they were expressing altruistic personalities that reacted to esthetic environment, they were still polytheists, which is only a verification to the student of anthropology, that the esthetic consciousness may be quite content with polytheism, but that it would not possess sufficient strength to project itself into the future and to conserve a great civilization.

In the development of this idea, just remember this struggle of the mind of man was just a struggle to find out some great mystical relationship, so he could interpret that mystical relationship in terms of theistic articulation.

Now we jump down through the years. We find religion in the making, until we come to that period where man developed from the polytheistic identity—instead of many gods and many laws, to monotheism, one law, one operative forming the background behind the whole physical and spiritual structure of the universe. Man became monotheistic in his philosophy. Then we find with a development of monotheism became what we may call the beginning of Christian expression of religion. Of course, the Jews began this whole Christian idea, and the whole idea of Christianity originated with the Jews. Paul, the greatest philosophic mind that Christianity ever had, was a renegade Jew.

Now we come to the thing where we have to preface the word "religion" by "Christian," if we talk about "religion in the making," and say "Christian religion in the making." The background of the majority of the religions, the devotees of religions are absolutely more in the majority than the Christian religion in the world; notwithstanding our years and years of missionary enterprise and the efforts we have made, we are still a minority religion; minority in point of acceptance of the devotees of our faith.

Now, what happened when we think of the Christian religion in the making? We know that the mind is not static. We know that the mind in proportion to its ability to grasp intelligence and to become an intelligent and expressive institution that immediately life becomes more expansive, and the more man knew about things

the more logical became his religion; and that is why clear-thinking, finely trained minds, and sanity of viewpoint and a refusal to let superstition and fear dictate our thinking, that is why that type of mind always sooner or later is compelled to discard the ancient orthodoxy of the medieval and the dark ages of religion; the mind of man grasps a consciousness of religion which will not permit alignment with these old and terrible and tragic paganisms, for every one of them came from paganism. Blood is not a peculiarity of Christ and of Love. Blood is the heritage of the old Hebrew idea of sacrifice, when they took the first of their flock. Our Christianity has become surfeited with paganism. Jesus was not a pagan. He was preeminently Greek. The New Testament was written in Greek, and the New Testament scholars are all agreed today that the men who wrote the New Testament were familiar with the source of Greek culture, and that is why the interpreters of Christianity, all of them, for the first three centuries, are silent about the great things we are fighting about today in the Christian Church.

Clement and Origen of the second and third centuries were Greeks, and the interpretation which they gave to the philosophy of Jesus was an interpretation of the old Greek attitude of mind in point of view. The attitude of God being imminent was Greek; the attitude of all life being related was Greek; the attitude of religion associated with moral emphasis for the higher perfection of individual consciousness was Greek. When Greece was destroyed and conquered by the Roman Empire and we have the introduction of the dark and the later middle ages, it was not until the fifth and sixth centuries that Augustine organized the Greek theology concerning the New Testament.

I am speaking now historical facts, not arguments, facts.

Then it was that the old Greek theological idea of religion was superseded by the Roman idea or Latin idea of religion, which made God an extraneous force, which had all of the arguments which we have today on the side of the ultra-orthodox brethren.

So we are face to face with the interesting situation because we are Liberals in our philosophical attitude of mind on this subject of religion. For all of the fathers and martyrs of the church, from Augustine down, that clever and capricious type of man Constantine who was conveniently converted to Christianity, and all that took place in that whole period, was all foreign to the fundamental moral and spiritual simplicity manifested in the sweetness of the character of Jesus Christ. There is no religion in it. And when we see it in the perspective of the centuries, we can see these ideas are still in the process of making; that there is no finality to any of it; that it is all a growth and evolution. All life is development and progress. Laws are behind the operation of the physical universe, but the physical universe does not remain static. When man discovered that the blood runs through his veins and arteries, when man discovered that when he violates certain dietetic laws that he must pay the penalty, when man realized the law of cause and effect, when we get through looking for God as an extraneous force, always looking for God outside of ourselves, always looking somewhere else, man's whole religious struggle until it was brought to its finest flowering in the life and personality of Jesus, man's whole struggle was to look outside of himself; in that period of history when all the commerce between the East and West passed through that little strategic point of land known as Palestine, He must have lingered there and listened to the folk-lore of the ancients, this marvelous interpretative and spiritualized consciousness of the Man of Sorrows, who illuminated and dignified forever human life

because he put a premium upon character, not creed; upon life, not churchanity; upon neighborliness and love rather than hatred and prejudices.

I am suspicious of the religion of any man who is more at home and on better terms with "angels" and "seraphs" than he is with the members of his own family, his neighbors or his city. When we have lost all conception of making a fit world in which to live then our world needs readjustment. Jesus emphasized the importance of dignifying human life here in all of its relationships, and in every spiritualized sentence that he ever uttered he reflected sympathetic understanding with weakness, tragedy and crime and those who lose and fail in the battle of life. We only see this great idea of religion developing through the structure of the race to find man persistently hungry for some answer, and we only deceive ourselves if we think there is no answer. We do not need to go to the finest results of materialistic scholarship; it is not necessary for us to go to the brutalities of the pure mathematician; it is not necessary for us alone to try to get the relationship of the universe in its operation and deviation which it has to mechanistic law. We have within ourselves the answer.

There were two great minds in Greece, the greatest minds that civilization has thus far produced, Aristotle and Plato. Take the minds of Plato and Aristotle, and associate with Plato and Aristotle the great mystical relationships of Plotinus and we have the flower of intellectuality. Huxley, and Darwin and all the geniuses of the past that have tried to think out a way for the physical universe have never sharpened their intellects sufficiently to penetrate that wall of mystery.

Darwin died, and almost his last utterance was "It is all a mystery." Hegel died, and almost at the end of a marvelous career of study and investigation, Hegel shouted to the world "There is so much that I cannot ever know; there is so much that is unfathomable."

Why, of course, when God is in the universe things are unfathomable. The whole thing speaks of the unfathomable nature of God.

Who are we who think we know so much to even know the rudiments of the cosmic spiritual universe of which we are all a part? Who are we that in the presence of star dust dare bring our limited intelligence? Who are we to glibly throw aside the great processes of life with only a shrug of the shoulder or a twinkle of the eye and say "We read nothing in it but law?" Who are we that we decide the great struggle of all the ages? My brothers of the long ago, my little brothers of the heart of the world, these brothers who found a crooked stick, these who took a pebble and washed it with their tears until its smoothness was like the velvet of the dawn; these who are kinsmen of mine! Oh, could I articulate back to them today it would only be:

Religion cannot be defined in terms of concreteness. It is always in the making. Every age has its process and makes its contribution. Every life sees God from a different angle, and the great eye of God can see me and you from an angle that is all our own.

And your old theories that you can put God in a creed and tie him up in a package and label him and hold him up to the world and say "Here is God. You must take Him as He is or He will damn you." We each know our God from our own inner relationships with him. We too understand each other.

And if we can only express that from its high point of view in human society, we welcome the open door of the laboratory, we welcome every fact of the universe that the scientist can give us. but we are not going to live in a physical universe and die and rot when it is over.

We are not a part of a machine;

we are sons and daughters of a greater force than all that, a force which inspires the highest rectitude of life, a force that always beckons to us to be our best when we are wallowing in the slime at our lowest.

The urge to go forward is the thing I call God. The will to live is God; from flowers to stars, it is God. And no blind universe with its blinder alleys, would ever be designed upon any other basis, without being a hodge-podge of accidents, and you and I merely puppets and pawns upon the chess-board of fate, played with and then discarded when this god gets tired of his toys. But behind that there is something loftier; there is something finer. Pascal found it, Plotinus found it, St. Francis of Assisi found it, James Martineau found it, Josiah Royce found it, Brooke Herford found it, Carpenter found it—these found it; and the same brotherhood across the ages, Socrates, Plato, they found it. Tacitus, he found it; Paul, he found it. Bigger minds than mine or yours have found an answer in this will to be ourselves, the gospel of the best is the gospel of God; the gospel of the highest is the gospel of Jesus.

No church is big enough to take in all of that; no creed is big enough to take in all of that. The gospel of the superlative is the Gospel of God. And no church, including this one, has a right to live that is not vitally helping human life to come into its highest.

The finest sentence I know in the Bible and the one I love best of all is this sentence, which I think explains Him better than any other:

"And He reached down and lifted him up."

That is religion.

And this Church must be a lifting church as well as a teaching church.

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"The purpose of the church is to deal in plain terms with the supreme things in human life as measured by the rational conclusions of science and history. It seeks to promote a conception of nature, history and the meaning of life in accordance with the facts of experience and with the progress of growing knowledge. It is essentially religious, not in the traditional but in the scientific and ethical sense of the word. It regards religion as spiritual energy directing itself toward the enrichment of the individual life and the perfection of the social order. This church assumes the right of every one to think his or her own thoughts, and expects the greatest progress to follow from entire intellectual liberty and perfect freedom of judgment. It welcomes to its membership all who wish to co-operate in making a world which shall be enlightened by knowledge, guided by reason and animated by good-will."

"Had the doctrines of Jesus been preached always as pure as they came from His lips, the whole civilized world would now have been Christian."—Thomas Jefferson.

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THE LIBERAL

Published monthly by The Peoples Church.
Preston Bradley ..... Editor
Grace Thayer Bradley.....
..... Associate Editor
Mrs. P. E. Goold .... Subscription Mgr.
5035 Winthrop Ave. Sunnyside 6095
Wm. Saunders ..... Business Mgr.
7028 N. Clark St. Rogers Park 0220
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REGULAR EVENTS

School of Religious Education — Sundays, 9:30 a. m., Channing Hall.

Woman's Club—Every Monday, Program, Edgewater Beach Hotel. Departmental Meetings, Channing Hall.

Men's Forum—Second Monday evenings, Channing Hall.

The Temple Club—Second and fourth Tuesday evenings in Channing Hall.

Church Trustees Meeting—Second Monday evenings.

THE WOMAN'S CLUB

November was an especially busy month for the Club. The interest being manifest has never been excelled. The programs and social affairs have been more largely attended than any previous year. Dr. Bradley gave the first of his literary programs before an appreciative audience at the Edgewater Beach Hotel on November 2. He spoke on A. S. M. Hutchinson's book "One Increasing Purpose." Mr. H. Van Horn gave the musical prelude of most artistically rendered piano selections. On November 12 the Club entertained the Ninth District Federation of Women's Clubs at the Webster Hotel. In the morning the reports of officers were read followed by a luncheon. A most interesting and unusual program followed. On November 16 the Club had the privilege of listening to a most effective and inspiring address by Mrs. Edwin T. Johnson, Past President of the Chicago Woman's Club. Miss Harriet Allen of Northwestern University gave a delightful program of readings. A large and deeply appreciative audience heard the program. On November 9 the Educational Department met in Channing Hall in the morning. Miss Meta Brand was chairman and the subject discussed was "Chicago As An Art Center." In the afternoon the Club visited the Chicago Historical Society. On November 23 the Educational Department met with Mrs. J. P. Wahlman as chairman. The subject was "Chicago as a Dramatic Center." The afternoon was spent in sewing for the Philanthropic Department.

For the month of December the Club has outlined a very busy and profitable program. On December 7 the Educational Department met in Channing Hall, 4701 Sheridan Road, at 10:30. Mrs. Ernest Winn was chairman and the subject was "Chicago Poets." In the afternoon a city social worker addressed the Philanthropic Department. Monday afternoon, December 14 at the Edgewater Beach Hotel Dr. Bradley lectured to the Club on the current play "Rain." On December 21 the Educational and Philanthropic Departments will meet in Channing Hall. The morning will be devoted to the "Fine Arts in Chicago" and a Christmas Party will be held in the afternoon.

December 4 and 5 the Club held a Christmas Sale of fancy goods, bakery and pantry articles at 1021 Lawrence Ave.

New members are being received at every meeting. The Club pledged $5,000 to the building Fund and $3,000 has already been paid this year. An invitation is extended to the women of the congregation to attend the meetings and become members.

—Grace Thayer Bradley.

THE TEMPLE CLUB

The Club which is composed of the younger group of the church has been very active during the month and has a feast of good things planned for December. The young people of the church are manifesting a fine interest in the Club. Social events, lectures, hiking parties and Sunday evening social hours have been held during the month. One of the most interesting evenings held was on November 17 when Charles Francis Edson, the poet laureate of the West, gave a recital of his poetry. On the evening of the 25th, a Thanksgiving Party was held in Channing Hall.

The Club will meet every other Sunday afternoon at Channing Hall and if the weather permits they will have a hiking party to be followed by a supper, program and social hour. The regular monthly programs will be held on the usual meeting nights during the week. Sunday afternoon, November 29 the Club gave a reception to the members of the Chorus Choir at Channing Hall. On the evening of December 8 they held a Bridge and Bunco Party. Miss Florence Mellum, Miss Anna Miller and Mrs. Eu-

gene Engstrom were in charge. Their Christmas Party will be the evening of December 22.

The members and officers heartily invite the young people of the congregation to their affairs and urge them to become members. Mrs. Engstrom, the secretary, Edgewater 7165, will gladly give information concerning the Club and activities.

THE MEN'S FORUM

The Forum began their season's activities in November with a very remarkable lecture by Pro. Joseph McCabe of London, England on "The Origin of Life." A large audience gathered and the scholarly address was greatly appreciated. Prof. McCabe is on a lecture tour in America and is attracting fine audiences everywhere. Following the lecture the audience asked questions suggested by the speaker. The Forum will hold another meeting in December. The speaker and subject will be announced by Dr. Bradley from the pulpit and announcements will be mailed to the members. The Club invites only the most authoritative speakers and is interested in the problems of contemporary life in a very fundamental way. The men of the congregation and city who are interested in important matters are welcomed to membership and attendance. The meetings are held in Channing Hall. Following every address discussions are invited from the floor. Dr. R. W. Lee, Ravenswood 2386, is the President. Communications and suggestions will be gratefully received by the secretary, Mr. Dumont, Juniper 10268.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The attendance at the school increased materially during the month. The Hallowe'en Party taxed the capacity of Channing Hall and all had a thoroughly good time.

The school meets every Sunday morning at Channing Hall at 9:30. There are classes for all ages taught by unusually competent instructors. Mr. Fuchs, the superintendent, has a class of boys who are studying for their current work the lives of some outstanding men. Unusual interest is being manifest in the course.

During the hour of the church services a trained kindergarten teacher takes charge of the younger children enabling the parents to attend the church services. Parents are invited to leave their children at the school during the morning service.

On the afternoon of December 22 the school will hold their Christmas party. In the evening of the same day the school will furnish a Christmas program for the parents. Dr. Bradley will be present in the evening and speak briefly on "The Meaning of Christmas."

The curriculum of the school has been carefully planned and merits the support of the parents and children of the church. The officers and teachers gladly welcome a visit from the parents.

THE BUSINESS WOMAN'S AUXILIARY

The Auxiliary is planned for those women of the church who are engaged during the day and find it impossible to attend the regular meetings of the Woman's Club. The same programs are frequently repeated for the Auxiliary and the women of the church are given all of the Club advantages. The evening of November 24th the Auxiliary met for a social hour at Channing Hall. On Tuesday evening, December 8, the program consisted of a book review of "Barren Ground." An invitation is extended to the women of the church who find it impossible to attend the day meetings of the Woman's Club.

THE PEOPLES CHURCH CHORUS CHOIR

The Choir has rendered some most inspiring and beautiful music during the month and Mr. Eddy's work at the organ gives the service a musical setting that is unsurpassed.

On the evening of December 18, Dr. Bradley will lecture at Channing Hall, under the auspices of the Choir on "An Evening With Some Old Music Masters." The proceeds are to go to the pledge fund of the Choir.

The Junior Choir is having weekly rehearsals and made their first public appearance this season at the Church services when they sang with the Senior Choir Sunday, November 29. On December 3 the Junior Choir will give a concert in Channing Hall under the direction of Mr. Dewitt Durgin Lash, Musical Director of the Church.

CHURCH NEWS

The services during November were largely attended in spite of the very inclement weather which prevailed every Sunday during the month. In fact, since church opened we have not had one Sunday of good weather. The work of the entire church has been steadily advancing. The various organizations are all active and a delightful spirit permeates the church. Everyone is working toward the completion of our church home. Every Sunday finds many strangers in the congregation—some coming from great distances. The Board of Trustees held their usual meeting while the Building Committee meets frequently. Let us all make December the best month of the year.

Every service of our church is broadcast by station WQJ Chicago. We are always glad to hear from our listeners. Hundreds have written to Dr. Bradley and the church expressing their appreciation for the services. Our church is the only Liberal church in America that broadcasts regularly every Sunday.

Dr. Bradley announces a very attractive series of sermon subjects for December.

December 6—"Are We Outgrowing Religion?"

December 13—"The Reality of the Spiritual."

December 20—"The World's Greatest Need."

December 27—"The Way of Remembrance."

The next issue of the Liberal will contain the sermon on "Reality of the Spiritual." The Liberal contains each month a sermon by Dr. Bradley. It is mailed to any address in the United States for one dollar a year. By becoming a subscriber you are assured of a copy each month. Kindly send one dollar to Mrs. P. E. Goold, 5035 Winthrop Ave., with your name and address. Owing to the demands for the Liberal it is uncertain to wait until it is on sale at the sermon table for your copy.

The ministerial activities since the last issue were: Oct. 28, address Minnesota State Unitarian Conference, Duluth; Kiwanis Club, Duluth, same day. October 30th, address Illinois State Unitarian Conference, Chicago. Nov. 2, lecture, Woman's Club, Chicago. November 5th, three addresses, Teachers Association, morning, Rochester, N. Y.; Rochester Ad Club, noon; Alliance, Unitarian Church, afternoon. November 6th, two addresses, morning, Teachers Association, Elmira, New York; afternoon, Rotary Club, Elmira, New York. Nov. 7, address, Church School, Channing Hall. Nov. 10, address, League of Voters, Milwaukee. Nov. 11, two addresses, morning, Chicago Woman's Club; afternoon, Chicago Historical Society. Nov. 12, address, Chamber of Commerce, Hammond, Indiana. November 13th, two addresses, noon, Friday Forum, (broadcast WMAQ); afternoon, Reciprocity-

Day, Portage Park Woman's club. Nov. 15, address, Laying Corner stone, Uptown Temple. Nov. 16, address, Grace M. E. Church, South Bend, Indiana. Nov. 17, address, American Art Bureau, Chicago. Nov. 19, Teachers Association Buffalo, N. Y. Nov. 23, meeting Administration Committee and Board of Directors Chicago Public Library.

Weddings

Oct. 27, Mr. George A. Hibbard and Miss Minnie S. Lindstrom, La Grange, Ill.

Nov. 7, Mr. Thomas O. Tracy and Mrs. Louise L. Donnelley.

Nov. 14, Mr. James M. Bidderman and Miss Marion L. Berg.

Nov. 22, Mr. Eric Ostrom and Miss Helen Geraldine Linday.

Funerals

Nov. 10, Mrs. Sarah A. McNamara, 1341 Carmen Ave. Interment Montrose Cemetery.

On Sunday, November 29th, our church held a union service with Unity Church in our Auditorium. The Rev. Fred. V. Hawley of Unity Church preached a remarkable sermon on "The Unity and Sanctity of Life." Dr. Bradley was out of his pulpit for the third time in nearly fourteen years. The religious liberals of Louisville, Kentucky, have been trying for years to get Dr. Bradley to Louisville for a Sunday. He was reluctant to go but finally decided to accept their pressing invitation and preach for them. He preached morning and evening in the First Unitarian Church at Louisville. The audiences filled the church at both services and many were turned away.

Dr. Bradley was recently honored by the Liberal Ministers' Association of Chicago by being elected President. The Association is composed of the modernist group from the following religious organizations, Congregational, Ethical Culture, Baptist, Reformed Jewish, Unitarian and Universalist. The meetings are held in the City Club on the second Mondays of the month. After the fellowship luncheon, a speaker is heard, followed by a discussion. Prof. Fred Merrifield, of the University of Chicago and All Souls' Church was president last year. The Association hears speakers on a diversity of subjects and is a very interesting membership.

—G. T. B.

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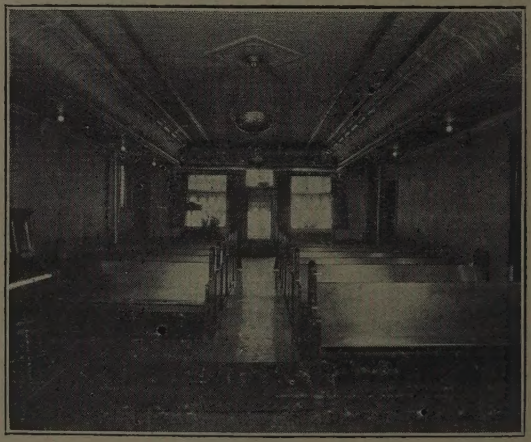

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